WE CLAIM:

1. A system for providing functionality over a network comprising:

a plurality of network-connected servers, each providing access to a set of functions implemented by program components within the server;

at least one network-connected client computer;

a management component coupled to each of the network-connected servers;

a shifting component within the management component operable to shift data and program components between the network-connected servers so as to configure a selected server to implement a specified set of functions; and

a redirection component responsive to a client request for the specified set of functions to redirect the requesting client to the selected server.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the selected network server further comprises:

a data storage mechanism;

processes responsive to client requests to accesses data in the data storage mechanism; and

processes operable to generate a response to the client requests using the accessed data.

3. The system of claim 2 further comprising:

processes operating independently of client requests to update data contained within the data storage mechanism.

4. The system of claim 2 wherein the data storage mechanism comprises a cache.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein the program components implement a database management system interface.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the network-connected servers is designated as a central authority for a particular set of functions and the program components implement processes for communicating with the central authority.

7. A system for providing functionality over a network comprising:

a plurality of network-connected servers, each providing access to a set of functions implemented by program components within the server;

at least one network-connected client computer; and

a redirection component responsive to a client request for selecting a particular one of the network-connected servers that implements a set of functions suitable for responding to the client request and redirecting the requesting client to the selected server.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein the plurality of network-connected servers comprise:

a first network-connected server in communication with the client;

a second network-connected server in communication with the first network-connected server, wherein the redirection component operates within the first network-connected server to identify and communicate with the second network-connected server to enable the first network-connected server to respond to the client request.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the first and second network-connected servers communicate with each other over an enhanced communication channel.

10. A system for implementing a web site comprising:

a first web server configured to provide a preselected set of content and service applications in response to client requests;

a second web server configured to provide a preselected set of content and service applications in response to requests from the first web server;

a communication channel established between the first and second web servers, wherein the web site is implemented by delivering web pages from at least one of the first and second web servers by distributed and cooperative interaction using services and content provided by both first and second web servers.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein the web site includes functionality that is implemented by service applications running on both the first and second web servers.

12. The system of claim 10 wherein the web site content is provided by the first web server and the web site functionality is provided by service applications running on the second web server.

13. The system of claim 10 wherein the web site content is provided by the second web server and the web site functionality is provided by service applications running on the first web server.

14. A system for rendering graphical information in a network environment comprising:

a network;

providing a first network service for accessing raw data from a data store;

providing a second network service configured to obtain the raw data from the first network service over the network;

application software in the second network service for rendering a graphic display of the raw data; and

a client interface in the second network service for communicating the rendered graphic display from the second network service to a client application.

15. A method for delivering customized content from one or more network services to a client computer comprising the acts of:

providing a plurality of network servers each providing access to a set of raw data;

requesting the content from the network servers;

causing the network server to incorporate the raw data into a "usuable format"; and

delivering the "usuable format" from the network server to a client computer.

16. A system for supplying rendered information in a network environment comprising:

providing a first server for accessing raw data from a data store;

providing a second server configured to obtain the raw data from the first network resource;

application software in the second server for transforming the raw data into a rendered format; and

a client interface in the second server for communicating the rendered format from the second server to a client application.

17. A system for delivering functionality from a network resource comprising:

a client machine coupled to a network, the client machine having a user interface and a preferred format for presenting data using the user interface;

a gateway machine coupled to the network and having a client interface for receiving requests from the client and supplying responses to the client, the gateway machine having knowledge of the preferred format; and

formatting mechanisms within the gateway machine for receiving content in a first format from the network resource and reformatting the received content to a second format for communication to the client machine.